

# Department of Defense (DoD)

## Instructions for Physical Examinations for Separation, Retirement, and Veterans' Compensation Programs

Service members who are planning to file a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claim for an injury or illness resulting from military service can receive their physical for service separation and VA compensation at the same time.

The goal of this program sponsored by DoD and VA is to reduce duplication of effort and expedite VA claims processing. To combine your Army separation and VA physical, you must begin the process before you leave Army service (prior to your terminal leave date).

## The Combined Physical Exam Process

★ Coordinate with your clinic and have your Part 1 army physical scheduled at the Soldier Readiness Medical Center (SMRC) located in the Thomas Moore Health Clinic (58th Street and 761st Tank Battalion Avenue) in/out processing desk, 254-285-6232.

★ Attend the VA claims assistance briefing. Briefings are held every Monday, except holidays, in Building 18010, 1st Floor, Room 110, at 12:45. A disability application will be given to you at the briefing.

★ After the briefing, complete the application. If you need assistance in completing the disability section, you may report to Building 18010, Room 308-A, where you will find representatives from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to assist you.

VFW Representative: Tom Parker, 254-288-3735  
TVC Representative: Paula Taylor, 254-287-3341

## After the Physical

★ Once your Part 1 Army physical is complete, results may be picked up from Mrs. Hardy (254-287-3871) at the Thomas Moore Health Clinic, Room B-087.

★ Take the completed VA Claim Form (VA-21-526), Part 1 Army physical results, and your service medical records to the VA Clinic located at Thomas Moore Health Clinic, Rooms B-093 or B-095. VA personnel, Joyce Holman or Ella Jones, will schedule your combined Part II Army physical and VA disability exam. Your exams will be scheduled with one of the VA examiners:

Kenneth Hawthorne, PA, Room B-097  
David Arzt, PA, Room B-091

Ft. Hood VA Clinic Telephone:  
254-287-4367  
254-287-4506

★ Once your VA exam is complete and prior to out processing, turn in your dental and service medical records to the VA Regional Office (VARO) Section located in Building 18010, Room 308-A. VA will give you a receipt for your records. After your official discharge date from the service, VARO will send you a letter informing you of your disability rating.

VARO Section Personnel: 254-288-3735  
Ivory Baker, Rating Specialist  
Lora Pam, Rating Specialist  
Bud Valdez, Rating Specialist  
Tracey Smith, Veterans' Service Representative  
Sylvester Stokes, Veterans' Service Representative

# Quick References

## Department of Defense

**Combined Physical Exam Process**  
**Soldier Readiness Medical Center (SMRC)**  
In/Out Processing Desk, 254-285-6232

## Department of Veterans Affairs

**Veterans Health Administration**  
**Central Texas Veterans Health Care System**

### Point of Contact:

Elaine Kunkel,  
Chief, Health Services Administration Section  
Toll Free: 1-800-423-2111, Extension 42003  
Direct Dial: 254-743-2003

### Case Manager:

Mike Husted, LMSW  
(Office at Ft. Hood)  
Phone: 254-288-6474, Extension 256

**Veterans Benefits Administration**  
**Waco VA Regional Office**

### General Information:

Toll Free: 1-800-827-1000

### Military Services Coordinator:

Tom Edmundson  
Phone: 254-288-6736 (Ft. Hood)

# Combat Veteran Information



## Operation Enduring Freedom

## Operation Iraqi Freedom

*Produced by: CTVHCS/IMS/Media Technology-September 2004*



# Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

## Returning Combat Veterans Guidance and Points of Contacts (POCs)

### Central Texas Veternas Health Care System (CTVHCS)

Austin - Brownwood - Bryan/College Station - Cedar Park - Marlin - Palestine - Temple - Waco

#### Point of Contact:

Elaine Kunkel,  
Chief, Health Services Administration Section  
Toll Free: 1-800-423-2111, Extension 42003  
Direct Dial: 254-743-2003  
Location: Building 171, Room B13A

The principal role of the VHA facility POC is to receive and expedite referrals and transfers of care from the VA-DOD Liaison and to ensure that the appropriate linkage is made for the requested clinical follow-up services. The POC:

- ★ Coordinates completion of applications for VA health care benefits and other paperwork necessary for treatment;
- ★ Confirms that returning combat veterans are enrolled at the treating VHA facility and arranges for assignment to a primary care provider;
- ★ Ensures the transfer of military medical record from the referring Military Treatment Facility (MTF) and coordinates the initial transfer of care activities; and
- ★ Alerts VHA facility clinical case manager of the impending transfer of care of all returning combat veterans.

#### Case Manager:

Mike Husted, LMSW  
Phone: 254-288-6474, Extension 256  
Office Location at Ft. Hood: Building 2255, Room A11  
Supervisor: Joy Duran, LMSW-ACP  
Toll Free: 1-800-423-2111, Extension 41312 or 40963

The principal role of VA medical center's Combat Veteran Case Manager(s) is to provide ongoing case management services to returning combat veterans and their families over the course of time that VHA health care services are being provided. The Case Manager:

- ★ Makes contact with the combat veteran prior to transfer of health care from the military treatment facility providing the name, the phone number, and the role of the Case Manager;
- ★ Makes similar contact with the combat veteran's immediate family and determines whether any family members will accompany the veteran;
- ★ Works closely with the combat veteran's interdisciplinary treatment team to ensure good communication and treatment planning;
- ★ Requests the VHA provider to contact the combat veteran's DOD provider at the MTF to discuss transfer of medical care;
- ★ Communicates and collaborates closely with the VBA through on-site VBA counselor and assists VBA in making contact with the veteran;
- ★ Makes referrals to community agencies for services not provided by VA;
- ★ Coordinates all the care and services provided to the combat veteran by the VA and by non-VA agencies from the initial point of contact until the combat veteran no longer requires services;
- ★ Identifies mental health treatment needs and readjustment counseling needs and make referrals as appropriate to the VHA facility Mental Health program and/or to the local Vet Center;
- ★ Communicates regularly with the MTF that referred the veteran; and
- ★ If the combat veteran is admitted to the VHA facility, actively participates in discharge planning involving the veteran and family, and keeping the MTF updated.

# Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

The VA Regional Office (VARO) in Waco, Texas, has an out-based Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) site at Fort Hood, Texas. The BDD was established to allow service members to file claims for service-connected disabilities prior to discharge from active duty. When a claim is received, the military and CTVHCS collaborate to provide the service member a comprehensive medical evaluation. The benefit of this program is that, at the time of discharge from active duty, the service member knows what may be considered for service-connected disability.

#### VARO staff located at Fort Hood include:

Military Services Coordinator: Tom Edmundson  
Rating Veterans Service Representatives: Ivory Baker, Bud Valdez, and Lora Pam  
Senior Veterans Claims Examiner: Tracey Smith  
Veterans Service Representative: Sylvester Stokes  
Officer in Charge: Ivory Baker, 254-288-3700  
Supervisor at VARO Waco: Angie Wild, 254-299-9702

#### Other personnel located at the BDD site include:

VFW Service Officer: Tom Parker, 254-288-3745, Extension 226  
TVC Service Officer: Paula Taylor, 254-287-3341

The BDD office is located across the hall from In Processing and Central Clearance in the newly constructed Copeland Soldiers Service Center. Any service member reporting for or leaving from active duty at Fort Hood must go through In Processing and Central Clearance. The close proximity of the BDD office to these 2 offices has resulted in approximately 900 walk-ins a month.

The BDD office also interviews surviving spouses and takes dependency and indemnity compensation claims which are sent to the VARO in Waco for processing. The office also works with the Army Casualty Assistance Office by visiting the surviving spouse and/or parents and providing information on VBA benefits and claims assistance.

In March 2003, VAROs were tasked with implementing an outreach program and providing expedited claims pro-

cessing for service members who participated in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) or Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). An OEF/OIF Coordinator, Ralph Calhoon, and Assistant OEF/OIF Coordinator, Pandi Van Houten, were appointed at VARO Waco. Points of Contact were established at VARO Waco and its out based offices and military installations to include military hospitals and VA Hospitals.

VARO Waco worked closely with Colonel Bernard DeKoning, Darnall Army Community Hospital (DACH) Commander, at Fort Hood, and Michael Smith, Patient Administration, DACH, in establishing a procedure to provide notification when an active duty, reserve, or national guard member who was injured while participating in the OEF or OIF theater and was subsequently hospitalized.

Carl Lowe, Director at VARO Waco, calls returning seriously disabled OEF/OIF service members who are hospitalized at DACH welcoming them home and advising them they will be contacted by the Military Services Coordinator (Edmundson) at Fort Hood. During the ward visit, the Military Services Coordinator briefs the service member on all potential VA benefits and services as well as other benefits and services available through other sources. The coordinator also assists in completing their claims and gathering supporting evidence. Service members are given the Military Services Coordinator's and OEF/OIF Coordinator's business cards containing their contact information. If the service member files a disability compensation claim, it is case managed by the Veterans Service Representative at the BDD site. At the service member's request, visits can be made at his or her residence instead of at DACH.

Seriously disabled OEF/OIF service members who are not admitted to DACH but who will receive medical discharge after review by the Army Physical Evaluation Board are identified in disabled transition and transition assistance briefings conducted by the Military Services Coordinator and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. All disability compensation claims received from seriously disabled service members are entered on an OEF/OIF log for control and receive priority processing, including an expedited examination at CTVHCS Temple facility.

Outreach is provided to Reserve and National Guard Units demobilized at Fort Hood. The Military Services Coordinator briefs Reservists and National Guardsmen on their entitlement to VA benefits as they return.